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punity. No other method which can be safely depended upon is known, although there are expedients which are resorted to by some persons, at the imminent risk of the work under their charge. The great aim of the cleaner ought to be to watch with the greatest care when he has penetrated the varnish and arrived at the painting itself, and the nearer he approaches it of course the greater ought to be his caution, lest he should apply the friction to the paint, which would be inevitably injured with so comparatively gritty a substance as pulverized varnish between the fingers. The dust must therefore be removed very often, and the parts from which it is removed examined, to see to what extent the process may be continued or otherwise.

If, however, the old varnish has not suffered from age, and it is the object merely to clean its surface, a little lukewarm water may be first applied with a sponge until the water ceases to be discolored. If then the varnish still presents an appearance of dirt, take a potato, and, cutting it in half, apply the fresh portion to the varnish, and, by a series of circles all over the surface, completely rub every part. Again apply the lukewarm water until it shows no taint of dirt. Should, however, the picture continue to exhibit traces of dirt, pass a sponge dipped in warm beer over it. Then, after it has become perfectly dry, wash it with a solution of the finest gum dragon dissolved in pure water.

Many pictures may come under inspection which have not been varnished. And here it may be mentioned that pictures should not be varnished for at least some months after they are painted, that the pigment may become thoroughly set and hard, and that before they are varnished the application of a potato, as before shown, should always be resorted to, to remove the exudations of the oils which rise to the surface, as well as the dirt collected, and this simple process will be quite sufficient to clean nine out of ten modern works. Artists will also find the use of the potato most valuable before commencing the progressive steps of their work, as it gets rid of that annoying greasiness which causes the newly applied and wet paint to run, after the manner of water upon a tea-tray. It ought to be remarked that the cleaning of a picture which has been varnished and one that has not undergone that process are two different things. Liberties may be taken with the former which would prove fatal to a picture not thus protected. In either case, as a preliminary experiment, the potato may be applied without fear of injury, provided that the moisture left by its juice is removed from the unvarnished picture.

Many finished oil paintings collect upon their surface what is termed "bloom," which in many instances entirely obscures the beauty of the work, and several receipts have been given for its removal; but all of these, or nearly all, are only temporary cures, the bloom returning sometimes with greater depth and opacity. Here, again, the potato is said to be the best remedy, if not an entire cure. Apply it as before, wash off with clean cold water, and then wipe the surface of the picture with a little sweet or nut oil with a silk handkerchief until perfectly dry.

Should, however, the painting require repairing as well as cleansing, from decay or defects in the material it is painted upon, then it may be found necessary to transfer the entire work to a completely new canvas, an undertaking which, at the first blush, would seem surrounded with almost insuperable difficulties, if not totally impossible. But if the following directions are closely followed it will be seen with what certainty and facility a feat so apparently formidable can be accomplished.

We will suppose we have a picture with its linen back perfectly rotten or worm-eaten, and almost too tender to touch, and, added to this, the work of the master is likewise covered with cracks, and otherwise is as bad a case as can be. First clean this decayed picture with more than usual care, for fear of breaking through the canvas, which would involve a more tedious process of restitution. Then with a sharp knife cut all around between the stretcher or frame and the canvas, and put the former aside; then spread the work with its face downward upon a smooth drawing-board or table; the back is now uppermost; then well moisten it with boiling water; this will shortly soften the canvas. Now turn the picture over with the subject uppermost, stretch it out and fasten it with drawing pins all round its edges to the board. Have ready a pot of strong glue, very hot and liquid, and spread the glue rapidly and equally over it. Now take a cloth which more than covers the

picture all round by two or more inches, spread it over the picture and glue, fasten it down to the table as before, and place the whole in the sun or open air to dry as soon as possible. When it is dried, it is to be detached from the board, and nailed down with the back of the painting uppermost. A little raised border of wax is made all round the edges, and the board being placed exactly level, a mixture of nitric acid and water is poured upon it. If this mixture be too strong, it will burn the painting; care must therefore be taken to prevent this by dipping your finger in the mixture before it is used. If your finger turns yellow immediately, it is a sign that the mixture is too strong and must be weakened. This mixture remains upon the canvas until the texture is quite destroyed and the threads eaten or rotted thoroughly, which can be easily ascertained either by the eye or the touch. The liquor is then poured off, and the threads of the canvas are easily taken off with a bone or ivory palette knife or other instrument, not of metal. The crust of the painting will then be found intact, glued with its face downward to the linen cloth before mentioned. The crust is then to be washed and cleaned with pure water, afterward wiped with a soft sponge, and left to stand until quite dry. It is then in its turn to be covered with glue wherein a little brandy should be mixed to make it stronger. Upon this glue a new canvas is to be immediately spread quite smoothly and well pressed, so that it may stick on every part. The best way of pressing it is with plates of lead or slabs of polished marble, care being taken to wipe the new canvas from time to time to prevent its sticking to the plates by means of the glue which oozes through the interstices of the fabric. All that now remains to be done is to take away the linen cloth and the glue which covers the face of the painting. As soon, therefore, as the last glueing is dry, the whole is to be detached from the board, and the linen cloth turned up; by moistening it with the mixture of nitric acid and common water its texture will soon be destroyed and it may be taken away, and then the glue may be easily dissolved by means of hot water. Thus is the painting transferred entire and perfect to a new canvas, which, in its turn, can be stretched upon a proper frame.

The proper tool for stretching canvas upon frames has two broad nippers with teeth-like grooves to hold the canvas, and a fulcrum at one side by which the leverage obtained may be very powerful. It is therefore necessary to be careful in the re-stretching of old pictures not to put too much strain on the canvas, or cracks may be made. The picture, is, however, generally in a sufficiently pliable state, immediately after the process before detailed, to prevent its cracking. Still, discretion must be exercised, and should the canvas "bag" after being nailed to the stretcher, the application of some weak fluid size to the back of the canvas will, as it dries, produce the tightness desired.

When paintings are upon wood, or panel, as it is termed, the wood must be pared till it is very thin, and the mixture of nitric acid and common water being poured upon what remains, will soon disintegrate the fibre of the wood, and render its removal perfectly facile. The same process should be followed as with canvas, only the picture at completion is attached with glue under pressure to the new wood.

ART IN PROVIDENCE.

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ART CLUB—CHANGES IN THE SCHOOL OF DESIGN.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., March 8, 1880.

In a previous letter I stated that the artists were agitating the subject of an art club. Well, a club is founded and called the "Providence," as are all things hereabouts not dubbed "What cheer?" Does it not sound modestly beside "St. Botolph" and "The Century?" But, never mind, if it can but "provide" food for the æsthetically hungry. Two weeks ago some eight or ten artists composed the club; now it has about forty members with fair promise of many more, as soon as the initiation fee and the preliminary steps toward admission are quite settled upon. Of course we must trust to Providence for support, though many of the citizens cannot yet obtain a clear view of prospective advantages to accrue to them by connecting themselves with such an organization; and, indeed, it is an exceeding difficult task to inform them, for one must confess that for some time, at least, the advantages are all to the artist element.

There are citizens—good, kindly, upright persons—who solemnly say, when addressed upon this subject, that, as for "helping" the artists, they do not believe in it. "What an incentive to great work poverty is! And we were not helped when we set up in cotton!" The exclamations bear the flavor of unimpeachable respectability. "And as for spending money on exhibitions, receptions, and other club expenses, it is not only foolish, but fearfully wicked when said money might aid the discovery of a perfect potato-bug poison!" Of course this sounds absurd, but it is the substance of veritable expressions. Do not forget that this is a civilized and cultured community!

When the R. I. School of Design began it wholly ignored the local artists. Indeed, when Mr. Barry first came to the city he was told that there were no artists here. Last Tuesday evening a reception was given at the rooms of the school. The artists were invited. After all it seems to be true that institutions as well as individuals may grow wiser as well as older. A pleasant company gathered, and, after addresses by President Farnsworth, Mr. Fay of the Legislature, and Mr. Krauz, an excellent designer (who, by the way, made a most sensible and fitting speech in interesting Anglo-German), the company were invited to partake of a generous collation.

A change has taken place in the school. Chas. A. Barry—an able, earnest, and efficient man—has been forced to resign his position. Mr. Porter, who was his assistant, is now the head master instead. A life-portrait class has been added to the course, and an art-library and school-museum begun. That the school under the new mastership is conducted in a broader, more enthusiastic, and more cordial manner is alleged. Vast prospects for school improvement and up-building are aired, but they will never be realized unless the treasury is replenished soon. It is strange that capitalists and manufacturers are so blind. They appear to believe that art schools, as well as artists, can live on dreams. But let us look ahead.

HJALMAR STURLESON.

BOSTON CORRESPONDENCE.

THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS—INNESS AND COLEMAN—NOTES.

BOSTON, March 13, 1880.

THE rich, high-colored façade of the Museum of Fine Arts, with its ornate, broad entablatures of red terracotta, has been secured against the juxtaposition of any thing out of keeping (and any thing would have been out of keeping with its unique beauty), by the purchase of a little "flat-iron" of land hitherto liable to be built upon by private owners. This is not the only sign of the prosperity of the museum, and the prominence of its position among the institutions of Boston. The annual report of the trustees, just out, argues that its popular attractiveness and use as an educator are amply shown in the fact that nearly 160,000 persons have visited it during the past twelve months, and that on one Sunday during the exhibition of Mr. Hunt's pictures there were no less than 4400 in attendance. It is important to note, however, that seven-eighths of this attendance came in on the free days—namely, Saturday and Sunday. Only 20,000 of the 160,000 visitors, it would seem, were ready to spend twenty-five cents on art. The receipts from all sources are, it is stated, sufficient to pay only about one third of the current expenses of the museum. But it is doubtful if the receipts of any museum of art could, or should, be made to pay its expenses. The endowment must be able to bear the cost for the public benefit, and in supplying the endowment the public pays for what it gets. In this case the public pecuniary support extended to the museum has been generous, even lavish, though not in the way of quarters at the door. The whole receipts of the year amount to a little less than \$5000. But when subscriptions were called for to complete the wing last added, \$120,000 were poured into the laps of the trustees in less than a week—or \$40,000 more than was needed.

Strange to say, with this generous fund for building, the amount applicable to purchases of pictures is but \$500 a year, derived from what is known as the Everett Artist Fund. It has always been the criticism on the administration of the museum that it has spent too much on the building and not enough on what is to go into it. But by this policy a casket fit for the treasures

it is to hold has at least been secured, and it is no small thing toward the influence a museum of art should exert that it be itself an object of beauty and an illustration of art. This the edifice which fairly matches its vis-à-vis, Trinity Church—the finest modern-built church in the world—in novel and satisfying picturesqueness and appropriateness, may certainly claim to be, warming our gray timorousness of taste with glowing color as it does, and indulging the American predilection for lightness and elegance of construction, as opposed to the ponderous style of construction of the Old World.

But let it not be supposed that our museum is empty either. You have had in this correspondence a description of the glorious masterpiece of Praxiteles, recently discovered at Olympia, the first (and perhaps still the only) cast of which in this country is here. A collection of casts from which, as the trustees' report says, "a peripatetic lecturer might discourse upon the history of sculpture in Egypt, Assyria, Greece, and Rome, with examples before him of almost every phase of its rise and decline," is surely a good, sound, and broad foundation for a museum. It is indeed confidently pronounced the best collection of casts in the United States by far, and one of the best in the world. Besides the noble Hermes from Olympia, above mentioned, there have been recently added the great Amazon bas-relief from the Villa Albani, several fine sarcophagi from the Vatican, one of the bas-reliefs from the Arch of Titus, and a number of stèles and fragments, some of which are not to be found in the grand collections of arts at Berlin and Paris. From the Cyprian glass and pottery to the Saracenic architectural sculptures from the country of the Moors, the chronological gaps have been nearly all filled, and modern art from the Renaissance, as shown through Japanese and Chinese art, to contemporary industry in Europe and America in fabrics and pottery, is almost as comprehensively represented.

But still it is confessed that with all the completeness of the museum collection as a general art exhibit, it is not yet the picture gallery that a museum is expected to be. With its \$500 a year for purchases, it is not likely to rival Madrid or Munich for some years to come. But there are a number of splendid private collections in Boston to be dispersed in the natural order of events, and it is very probable that the museum will be remembered in many wills in the course of the next twenty years. It is remarked, with a tone of disappointment, in the trustees' report, that the exhibition of contemporary art which was held in conjunction with the Boston Art Club last spring, and which consisted of more than eight hundred pictures sent by contributors from all parts of the country, failed, though largely attended, to attract the general attention which its unusual merits deserved. It was an unacknowledged attempt to inaugurate an exhibition in Boston that should be something such an event for the art and artists of the whole country as is the exhibition of your National Academy of Design. The officials of the museum took more pains with it than they ever would, or indeed ever could again, because the galleries of the new wing had just been completed, and a rearrangement of the whole contents of the museum was at hand. What the museum trustees must first do to give this institution prestige and influence throughout the land with a metropolitan annual exhibition is to provide ample galleries for a temporary exhibition so as not to disturb the permanent one. This they could easily accomplish, and at light cost, by utilizing the huge lot in the rear of the museum, and building to it an annex like the art annex at the Centennial Exhibition. In fact this has been much talked of, and favorably considered by those in authority. But the present management have still, as from the beginning, their ambition and desires chiefly centred upon the permanent building, and the chairman, Mr. C. C. Perkins, concludes his report with the characteristic aspiration: "It seems not unreasonable to hope that some of those who took part in the modest beginnings of the museum may live to see the building completed according to the original plan."

Two of your New York artists have made special exhibitions of their work here during the past fortnight. Mr. George Inness has had the gallery of the Art Club for a collection of twenty-six of his latest pictures, landscapes splendid with all the verve of technique and richness of color and light for which he is distinguished. Never was his optimistic enjoyment of nature, or his enthusiasm for work, more lively, to judge from these

latest products. The criticism oftentimes heard here, where Inness is well known from a long residence, and much admired, is that along with this splendid composition, this confident facility in transmitting nature into glowing visions matching the artist's own fervid fancies, goes a certain unreality—the consequence of artistic exaggeration for theatrical effect, which, while it extorts admiration for the ripe art of the academician, detaches the sympathy of the simple but earnest and devout lover of nature and truth. Mr. Coleman's show embraces several of his decorative panels, such as the one reproduced in a late number of the *THE ART AMATEUR*, and a number of landscapes and oil sketches. The panels, so exquisitely finished and delicately toned, have excited genuine applause for the skill and patience of the artist, and it has been a revelation to the lay public that the decorative panel could be done in any other way than the large, free, and dashing manner with the flowers and fruits in arbitrary and non-natural arrangement of stems and clusters, and the colors selected, heightened, and contrasted at will without much reference to nature, but as the design demanded. The sweet, simple, conscientious truth of Mr. Coleman's apple-blows and peach-blossoms upon a background of Madras muslin of equally tender tint shames the bravado of much of the decoration of the day imitated from the barbarisms of the Japanese or the archaisms of the English schools of decorative art.

Several of the younger generation of Boston artists are to be among the contributors to the next National Academy Exhibition in your city. You will have an example of Vinton's Bonnat-like portraiture, of Sellinger's too-faithful Munich technique, and of Dewing's Burne-Jonesism; and we shall be much interested to hear what you will say. Of exhibitions here, there is little at present to be said. J. Appleton Brown is soon to have one of which I will tell you in my next. He is the most poetic of our landscapists, and would attract notice anywhere, even among the best of the modern French school of landscape. The Saturday Club, including the best of Hunt's young lady pupils, is also soon to give a public exhibition. Otherwise the local show of paintings at present runs to foreign works, and some fine examples of the best names are always to be found here and there among the dealers.

The new St. Botolph Club expects to open its doors to its members about April 1. One of the purposes of this Boston Century Club is to hold a monthly exhibition of pictures, and the opening should be signalized with something of the kind. I hear that the third story, which is to be the especial habitat of the younger class of members, is to be turned over to the artists of the club to decorate at their own sweet will and with their own handiwork. It is to be hoped they will paint on movable panels such as Mr. Coleman's, for the club will want to remove probably before many years from the house that has been chosen for it—not the thing at all for the club representing the quintessence of Boston society, art, and letters.

GRETA.

AN ART PARASITE.

THE following portrait of a picturesque but otherwise objectionable person is sketched by the New York correspondent of The Louisville Courier-Journal:

"Perhaps the work of some of our good artists would be better appreciated if it were not for the crushing efforts of the professional picture buyers. One of this lot, and the worst knave in the pack, is an old fellow by the name of Chills, a portly old subject with a rubicund face, surrounded by a redundant mass of waving white hair. He is worth about a half a million of variegated plunder, and this stuff, added to his commanding physique, seats him on a pedestal for feminine admiration. With maiden ladies who have passed their tenth lustrum he is a 'fine-looking man'; with experienced widows he is a 'darling'; in reality he is a pestilent old rogue. He attends all the small sales, and when he finds a group in front of a really meritorious picture he thrusts his red face forward, looks for a moment, and exclaims, 'Pish! I wouldn't give \$5 for a wagon-load of such pictures.' Some one of the group will say, in awe-struck tones, 'That is the wealthy Mr. Chills, a great judge of art; we must be mistaken about the picture.' Old Chills afterward buys it for a song, and sells it at private sale at a thousand per cent profit. This old vulture has been known to buy some good pictures, have them copied cheap, and sell them for the

originals over and over again. In fact it is currently believed that he keeps two or three painters, clever in mere imitation, to forge the works of good artists, signature and all. The landscape painters are by this old fellow much maligned with meretricious imitations of their pictures, which are sold in the country, where detection is less easy. Now if Chills should go into the coffee or tea market and operate in this way, by notifying the general public that they were being imposed upon by spurious articles, and bringing the price down in this manner to suit his own purse, he would soon be cooling his heels in jail. In a more practical and less civilized community he would be found some night with his head in a ditch and his heels pointed to the disgusted starry heavens. But Chills is perfectly safe here. He is virtually rich. He is the American 'Isambert,' or on the highway to become so. By and by he will have his million, if he lives long enough. What does he want of a million? Why, to make a million with it, and if he should succeed in making several of them, the mantle of public esteem will be permanently draped upon his shoulders."

PRINCE DEMIDOFF AND THE SAN DONATO SALE.

THE great art event of the spring in Europe is the sale of Prince Demidoff's collections at the palace of San Donato. Concerning the eccentric owner of this famous palace The Parisian has the following:

"Prince Paul Demidoff often says, 'Ah! if I could only find a man who would undertake to change my collections every day!' This exclamation of ennui paints the whole nature of the man. He wants to enjoy, but no sooner has he enjoyed than he becomes bored, and desires some new distraction. The palace and collections of San Donato, which are to be sold at Florence in March, owe their existence, for the most part, to the grandfather and uncle of the present owners, the Princes Nicholas and Anatole Demidoff. The palace and the beginning of the collection only date from 1828. Ten years ago a first sale of pictures took place at Paris. The fabulous prices paid are still fresh in the minds of amateurs. Terborch's 'Congress of Munster' was sold for 182,000 francs; Cuypp's 'Avenue de Dordrecht,' 140,000 francs; Van Ostade's 'Village,' 104,000 francs; a Teniers, 110,000 francs; a Hobema, 77,000 francs. The day after the sale Prince Anatole Demidoff died and left the remains of his vast collections to Prince Paul, who has since passed his life in completing the lacunæ in the various departments. Now Prince Paul has taken a dislike to the Palace of San Donato and his collections. He wants to have a palace and a collection of which he shall have himself been the sole creator. He has therefore determined to install himself in the Château de Pratolino, which he is going to have rebuilt, and in which he will gather together a new collection of pictures and objects of art. Paul Demidoff is now a man of thirty-nine years of age. He came to Paris in 1858. He had not yet come into possession of his immense fortune; his uncle was still living, and his income was modest. He was a handsome man in the full force of the term—tall, slender, elegant; pale complexion, somewhat bronzed; brown hair and mustache; open and high forehead and pale-blue Slav eyes, soft, languid, and veiled by long lashes. Under a skin of satin he had muscles of steel; he was built to resist life and to triumph over life. He always used to dress in a short coat, a round hat, rather short trousers, and shoes. He never wore a waistcoat, and never suffered from cold. He was eccentric, sometimes excessively so. He would call up his servants, open all the windows, and take a cold bath. He had constantly at his bedside a decanter of iced champagne, of which he drank all night. Nobody, however, ever heard of Paul Demidoff being drunk. In the morning he sometimes had fancies worthy of Nero. He would send for four or five servants, and make them fight together until they had eliminated the victor, who received a handsome gratification."

The sale of the collections at the palace of San Donato began on Monday, March 15. There was an immense attendance, including several of the Rothschilds, the directors of the Paris, Berlin, Brussels and Antwerp museums, and a number of Americans. The pictures were sold on the first three days. The Herald gave, by cable, the result of the principal sales the opening day as follows, the names of buyers following the prices: